

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0242

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ZA

SUBJ: KAUNDA AGAIN LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN TO KAPWEPWE

REF: (A) LUSAKA 3376, (B) LUSAKA 0024

SUMMARY: BOTH DAILIES JAN 26 GAVE BANNER HEADLINE TREATMENT TO A STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT KAUNDA ON KAPWEPWE'S ROLE IN ZAMBIAN POLITICS. HIS COMMENTS WERE MADE FOR NIGERIAN TELEVISION DURING KAUNDA'S RECENT WEST AFRICAN VISIT. THEY EMPHASIZE, AS HAVE PRESS STATEMENTS IN THE PAST, THAT THE POLITICAL REHABILITATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE UPP IS CONDITIONAL ON THEIR REJOINING UNIP. IN AN APPARENT HARDENING OF HIS POSITION, KAUNDA APPEARED TO EXCLUDE NAMING KAPWEPWE DIRECTLY TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. EMBASSY VIEWS PUBLICITY GIVEN TO KAUNDA'S INTERVIEW AS CONTINUATION OF GRZ CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE KAPWEPWE AND HIS SUPPORTERS TO RETURN TO UNIP OR FAILING THIS TO SHOW KAPWEPWE'S FOLLOWERS THAT HE ALONE THROUGH RECALCITRANCE IS EXCLUDING HIMSELF FROM THE MAIN STREAM OF ZAMBIAN POLITICS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN TV INTERVIEW FILMED FOR NIGERIAN TELEVISION, KAUNDA SAID HE HAD TOLD KAPWEPWE IN SEPTEMBER 1976 THAT, IF
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HE WANTED TO RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF ZAMBIA, HE SHOULD REJOIN UNIP. "I KNOW THAT I CAN BEAT HIM," SAID KAUNDA. THOSE ASPIRING TO CONTEST ELECTIONS IN 1978 SHOULD ACT NOW TO TAKE OUT UNIP PARTY CARDS BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. "KAPWEPWE SHOULD KNOW, SINCE HE HELPED TO DRAW UP THE CONSTITUTION, THAT NO ONE COULD HOLD OFFICE IN THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT WITHOUT BEING A PAID UP MEMBER OF UNIP FOR

TWO YEARS."

2. KAUNDA SAID THAT KAPWEPWE'S APPARENT REFUSAL TO REJOIN UNIP AT THE BRANCH LEVEL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE PARTY CONSTITUTION COULD BE CONSTRUED TO MEAN HE WANTED A BIG POST. NO ONE ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS DIED TO OPEN A POST FOR KAPWEPWE. THE ONLY ROAD OPEN TO HIM FOR REENTERING POLITICS IS TO "START FROM SCRATCH."

3. AS FOR KAPWEPWE'S FOLLOWERS, THEY WERE NOT EXCLUDED FROM HOLDING TOP POSTS IN THE PARTY, GOVERNMENT, OR PARASTATALS. IF THEY WISH TO RISE IN THE HIERARCHY OF THESE INSTITUTIONS, "THEY SHOULD FIRST REJOIN THE PARTY AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL AND RISE TO THE TOP BY MERIT." PROVIDED UPP FOLLOWERS OF KAPWEPWE ARE TRULY REPENTANT, THEY WOULD BE WELCOMED BACK INTO UNIP LIKE LOST SHEEP.

4. IN AN INTRIGUING ASIDE, KAUNDA SAID THAT HE HAD MET WITH KAPWEPWE FOLLOWING KAPWEPWE'S PRESS INTERVIEW OF JAN 2 (REFTEL B). KAUNDA REFUSED TO ELABORATE ON WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THE MEETING.

COMMENT: AS NOTED PREVIOUSLY (REFTEL B), KAUNDA AND OTHER UNIP LEADERS ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PARTY'S SHOWING WILL BE POOR IN THE 1978 ELECTIONS. THIS CONCERN IS ESPECIALLY ACUTE IN THE COPPERBELT AND NORTHERN PROVINCE WHERE KAPWEPWE'S BEMBA FOLLOWERS ARE NUMEROUS AND APPARENTLY DISAFFECTED FROM UNIP. RECONCILIATION WITH KAPWEPWE WOULD SERVE KAUNDA'S POLITICAL INTEREST, BUT HE IS UNWILLING TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PAY KAPWEPWE'S PRICE (HIGH POLITICAL OFFICE). IF HE CANNOT ATTRACT KAPWEPWE BACK INTO THE UNIP FOLD, THEN KAUNDA WOULD LIKE TO CONVINCE KAPWEPWE'S FOLLOWERS THAT THEY SHOULD REJOIN UNIP AND THAT LOYALTY TO AN UNREASONABLE KAPWEPWE LEAVES THEM WITH NO POLITICAL FUTURE. KAUNDA'S STRESS ON THE NEED FOR KAPWEPWE AND HIS HIGH RANKING FOLLOWERS TO START OVER AGAIN AT THE BRANCH LEVEL OF UNIP POLITICS PRIOR TO ASPIRING TO HIGH OFFICE WILL NOT PROVIDE MUCH HOPE TO KAPWEPWE SUPPORTERS. LOW

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